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BOOK REVIEWS

Le Génie féminin français. By MARTHE BORELLY. Paris, Boccard, 300 p.

In her well-written book, Marthe Borelly examines what are the limits of woman's personality and what her true place in society is, what it was in the past, what it must and will be after the war. The book contains also an interesting study of love, and the relation existing between love and fashion.

The author does not admit the principle of the equality of the sexes. "Nature," she says, "has made man and woman complementary." It established a law of necessity and not of equality. Marthe Borelly has no sympathy for the suffragists. She seeks to direct the future of her sex along the path marked out by the highest feminine culture of the past.

For many people, the ideas of the author will perhaps appear to be old fashioned, but she expresses the views of the majority of French womanhood. While not a scientific treatise, the book is very well written and is completely free from hysteria, which is so common in discussions of the woman question.

M. P.

Le Sens de la mort. By PAUL BOURGET. Paris. Plon, 1916. 328 p.

One of the books most read in France since 1916 and also one of the most commented on is this stirring meditation, *Le Sens de la mort*, upon a topic that the immense and frightful war brings constantly to our thoughts.

The author of "Le Disciple" and "Les Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine" shows us on one side a superior man, a great physician. He is atheistic, he denies the spiritual forces and believes only in the positive ones. Death stands suddenly before him. He cannot adapt himself to it. "He accepts it with courage, but it is a courage formed of crushed resignation. It is his intellect bowing, with a desperate impotence, under the action of irresistible and supreme forces, for him monstrous, because they created him only to crush him." On the other side, Bourget shows a young French officer, with a culture not far removed from the physician's culture, but the young man believes in God, in a future life, in a salvation "which is to keep living the best of ourselves." He is wounded, he knows death is coming, his doctrine allows him and gives him the strength to accept it, he adapts himself to it. Then where the other sinks, he triumphs. For the former one death is "an absurd catastrophe," for the latter it is a "consummation, an accomplishment." And Bourget affirms that "Death has no meaning if it is but an end, it has one, if it is a sacrifice.

Le Sens de la mort not only brings forth a very interesting problem of religious psychology but it can be interpreted as a sign of the new spirit which is being born in France.

M. P.

Mors et Vita. By ALFRED LOISY. Paris, Nourry, 1916. 86 p.

Mr. Loisy, the author of this little book, is a former catholic priest who, following the example of Renan, broke with the church because he could no longer blindly believe in the Roman Catholic dogmas.

Mors et Vita is a criticism of the two famous works: *Le Sens de la Mort*, by Paul Bourget, and *Le Voyage du Centurion*, by Ernest Psichari, works that are representative of the so-called "*Mouvement Catholique Moderniste*," now taking place in France and which includes numerous French authors like Bourget, Barrès, Bazin, a movement which is so brilliantly illustrated by the "ultimate sacrifice" of young French intellectuals, among them Péguy and Psichari, the latter a grandson of the great apostate Renan, both of these young men converted to the Roman Catholic Church and killed on the Field of Honor.

The criticism of Loisy is extremely keen. The author transports into the apologetical field what through the writings of Psichari and Bourget thousands of young Frenchmen feel intuitively and instinctively.

Loisy tries to demonstrate that nothing very strong binds the renewal of the French spirit to the Catholic dogmas. He declares, however, that a great number of young men, not less ignorant of doctrinal and theological Catholicism than Ernest Psichari, adhere to the church as a result of the horror they feel for the moral emptiness of our non-religious society before the war. Renan, he says, had above all experienced the church intellectually; Ernest Psichari and men like him have experienced the century as "impressionists" and through the feelings and realizing its inadequacy, he turned to the church. "The question," continues Loisy, "would be to know if the traditional center of our moral life would not tend to displace itself, and if a "nation of souls" may not be in the making, not against the old religious confessions, but outside of them and especially of the Catholic church."

M. P.

Gaspard, By RENÉ BENJAMIN. Paris, Fayard, 1915.

Among the numerous vivid books that have been written by soldiers from their own experiences during the war, *Gaspard* may be counted as one of the best.

Gaspard is a product of Paris. He joined his regiment in the beginning of the war, and among hardships and misfortunes, while engaged in battles, his spirit always joyful, his clever, lively, ingenuous repartées, so characteristic of the Parisian, keep the spirit of his comrades always high. He is intelligent and equal to any emergency, he derives advantage from anything and makes the best of bad situations. He is patriotic and understands why he is fighting. He is the real type of the French soldier.

The reading of Mr. Benjamin's book would be very useful for those who are interested in psychology of soldiers.

M. P.

L'Avenir de l'Intelligence. By CHARLES MAURRAS. 2nd ed. Paris, Nouvelle Libr. Nationale, 1917.

According to Maurras, intelligence, which is a predominant function of the brain and which expresses itself by writing is likely to lose its rôle and dignity. It is in danger of falling more and more under material influences; gold will master it, enslave it and domesticate it. One of the causes of this situation is that Romanticism is developing in the direction of the most unrestrained and narrow individualism. Maurras suggests some political remedies, among them the rule established by the genius of Auguste Comte. This gives Maurras an op-